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Dr. Kissinger's Remarks to President Pompidou
May 18, 1973

Permit me to deal first with the relations between the United States and the Soviet Union. To speak with you with complete frankness; even though our tactics may seem faulty on certain points, it is very important that you understand perfectly the objectives of our strategy. I would like you to consider my words as strictly confidential and reserved for you alone.

Have we chosen the Soviet Union over China? This is a crucial question that you have asked and my response is absolutely negative. There is no sense in choosing the stronger against the weaker. If the Soviet Union managed to render China impotent, Europe would become a Finland and the United States would be completely isolated. It is therefore consistent with our own interests not to want, and to try not to permit, that the Soviet Union should destroy China.

We have never used such frankness in discussing this with another head of state. It is extremely important that you understand our real strategy. How can one support China? Today, such an idea would not be conceivable for American opinion. We need several years to establish with China the links which make plausible the notion that an attack directed against China could be an attack on the fundamental interests of the United States. This is our deliberate policy. We have the intention to turn rapidly toward China in the space of two or three years.

It is nevertheless important that this movement not serve as a pretext for a Soviet attack against China. It is consequently necessary that our policy be such that it does not seem to be directed against the Soviet Union and that detente is carried on in parallel with the Soviet Union; that the Soviet Union uses its power in conditions of peace and not of tension; finally that there would be a certain juridical obligation which would be violated if the Soviet Union undertook a military attack against China.

Frankly, we are very preoccupied by Soviet intentions toward China, especially since the visit that I paid to Brezhnev. I believe that it was Talleyrand who said that the art of diplomacy consists of playing the fool without being it, and it is true that I listened with interest to Brezhnev's thoughts and his threats toward China, which became increasingly clear. He doubtless would like to involve us in them. But in no circumstance and at no price will we collaborate in such an enterprise. What might succeed against China could also be used against Europe. The entire world situation would then be threatened.

The question then is to know not whether we should resist the Soviets on this, but how to do it.

It is therefore absolutely essential that you personally and President Nixon understand each other well on the fundamental objectives of our strategy. It may be complex, but it is not stupid. Our agreement, which I am completely prepared to discuss with you or M. Jobert, is an attempt to enmesh the Soviet Union. We aimed to gain time, to paralyze the Soviet Union; in the opposite case we would have the juridical possibility to act in conformity with our national interests in areas which are not covered by alliances. And this is in our interest.

Concerning Europe, you asked what the attitude of the United States would be toward Soviet predominance which might be gained by non-military means. We believe that it would be very dangerous for Europe to allow itself psychologically to lose its capacity to have a strong and independent policy. As long as this Administration remains in office, we will do the maximum to prevent such a psychological deterioration by cooperating closely with those in whom we have confidence, such as President Pompidou. It is in this context that you should study our propositions.

We believe it is essential to create again in each country in the West a new sense of commitment among friends. It is only in this way that we can resist the Soviet strategy which hopes to weaken our will to resist. It is with this intention that we drafted our "declaration of principle" to elicit common actions among friends. Dealt with in this context I believe that economic questions, monetary questions or agricultural questions will find a sympathetic hearing by President Nixon. It would be a nightmare for us to have to deal for three more years with technical questions while the Soviet Union continues to gain in the psychological realm. When President Nixon has left and when President Pompidou will have completed his term, which is similar to that of Mr. Heath, we will find ourselves in a situation where it will be extremely difficult to organize a Western policy turned toward the future.

We do not seek to dominate Europe; on the contrary we want a strong Europe. A strong Europe is as essential as a strong China. We have always believed that in a strong Europe, as General de Gaulle and you yourself were able to determine in your discussions with President Nixon, France would play a pivotal role. We do not believe that Germany is sufficiently strong psychologically, and we believe it is too open to Soviet pressures to be able to contribute to develop a Europe in this sense. It is therefore of great importance that you understand our real policy.

We don't have many illusions about Brezhnev. In any case I believe it is very important that the results of your Summit at Reykjavik, where you will have long discussions with President Nixon, should not be presented by the European governments in such a way as to support the Soviet strategy. After the war in Vietnam, we need time in the United States to give ourselves room for maneuver, and we would not want at all that our European policy become the object of the same attacks that were directed at our Vietnam policy, and on the part of the same groups. We would like to act in such a way as to increase Soviet difficulties.

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

PARTICIPANTS: Ambassador Huang Chen, Chief of PRC
Liaison Office in Washington
Han Hsu, Deputy Chief of PRC Liaison Office
Chi Ch'iao Chu, Staff of PRC Liaison Office
(Interpreter)

Dr. Henry A. Kissinger, Assistant to the
President for National Security Affairs
Brigadier General Brent Scowcroft, Deputy
Assistant to the President for National
Security Affairs
Lawrence Eagleburger, NSC Senior Staff
Richard Solomon, NSC Staff
Peter W. Rodman, NSC Staff

DATE AND TIME: Tuesday, May 29, 1973
6:00 p.m. - 6:45 p.m.

PLACE: Dr. Kissinger's Office
The White House

Huang: I am very happy to see you in Washington.

Kissinger: We are very happy to see you here. We started it all in Paris! [Tea was then served] We cannot give you tea the way you drink it. You know right away you are in a barbarian country! [To Han Hsu:] Don't contradict me. [To Huang:] Did you have a good trip?

Huang: Yes.

Kissinger: Someone told me you were not discriminating against us in not speaking English because you didn't speak French either.

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Huang: First of all, I'd like to thank you for sending Mr. Solomon to New York to meet me and General Scowcroft to meet me in Washington.

Kissinger: We attach very great importance to our relationship and hope our relationship will be fruitful.

The President will see you soon. We are trying to arrange it for tomorrow morning before we go to Iceland. If not, we will do it immediately after we get back.

Huang: We know the President is very busy and we will be happy to meet him.

Kissinger: It will be very soon. We are glad you are here in time for the Brezhnev visit. We know you would not want to miss it! [Laughter]

Huang: I would like to convey the greetings of Foreign Minister Chi Peng-fei and Vice Minister Ch'iao Kuan-hua.

Kissinger: Thank you very much.

Huang: Before I left Peking, the Prime Minister said he wished Dr. Kissinger well and welcomed him to visit in August.

Kissinger: The only way I can keep my staff disciplined -- and not have a revolution because of the oppressive conditions -- is to promise them a trip to Peking every six months. And we instructed Ambassador Bruce to do a good but not outstanding job, so there would be some things left over for me to come to Peking to do.

Huang: He mentioned that to the Premier. [laughter]

Kissinger: You are well settled in the Mayflower?

Huang: Yes, quite well settled in the hotel. Before coming here I met with our press delegation who had just met with the President and Dr. Kissinger. They were very happy and very touched by the reception, and very honored and very much pleased by the President's welcome.

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Kissinger: Mr. Ambassador, we are really very determined to achieve the normalization of relations between our two countries.

I had a talk Sunday with Ambassador Huang Hua -- whom we must invite here some time. I don't want to tell you your heirarchy, but we really owe him a visit here, in view of his many courtesies to us in Peking.

Huang: Ambassador Huang Hua told us, and he is looking forward to it.

Kissinger: And I will talk to you in greater detail about the Brezhnev visit next week. But I want to tell you now we will not vote in any major question in the United Nations General Assembly or Security Council against the PRC with the Soviet Union -- regardless of what agreements we may make with them. You may have to stand alone, with just two people, you and Albania, like last time, but we won't be against you. So on that nuclear war issue, we can tell you now that we will abstain and not vote against you. So you can communicate this.

We would be prepared to consider some joint declaration that neither of us will engage in any negotiation against the other or that neither of us will join in any agreement without consultation with the other. It is in any event the spirit of our policy. Whether we do it publicly is up to you. We are prepared to do it publicly.

Huang: As for this matter, Ambassador Huang Hua in the message he conveyed has already made our position clear.

Kissinger: I understand your position.

Huang: But we will convey what you just said.

Kissinger: I understand. But since one of your concerns is the hegemony of two large nuclear countries, I wanted to make clear this is not our policy, and we are prepared to make this clear publicly. [Huang nods yes]

I understand Ambassador Han Hsu is presenting his credentials to Joe Alsop this week. [Laughter]

Scowcroft: Congratulations.

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Kissinger: I was invited to a dinner, but I will be in Iceland. When I was appointed to this position, Joe Alsop made a special trip to New York to check on my suitability.

Huang: He is a very well-known columnist.

Kissinger: He wrote some exceptionally good columns about China. And you took especially good care of him.

Huang: You know about the Premier's talk with Mr. Childs?

Kissinger: Yes. I got a bitter complaint from Senator Fulbright. He accused me of getting the Premier to say what he told Marquis Childs about American troops in Europe. [Laughter] I said the Premier was on the Long March and there are one or two things he does on his own. [Laughter] I think it was a very helpful talk.

Huang: And the Premier mentioned you a number of times in his talk and supported your view of the new Atlantic Charter.

Kissinger: He didn't print that. Actually, this idea isn't new to the Prime Minister because I discussed it with him in February, and the basic strategy our two countries are pursuing towards Europe are not very different.

Huang: In your statement on the new Atlantic Charter you mentioned that politics should be put in the fore and not get wrangled in economics. The Premier considers your philosophy on this matter is correct.

Kissinger: If he would like to take over some European countries, we would be in favor. [Laughter]

The President of France asked me about our policy toward Europe. I made a strong statement to him. I will send it to you tonight or tomorrow morning. [A transcript of Dr. Kissinger's remarks to President Pompidou, Tab A, was handed to Ambassador Huang the next morning by Dr. Kissinger.]

Are you staying at the Mayflower?

Huang: Yes.

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Kissinger: I have a very important question for you, Mr. Ambassador.
[To Han Hsu:] You know what the question is? [To Ambassador Huang:]
Did you bring a cook? [Laughter]

Huang: Not only one.

Kissinger: Ambassador Han Hsu arranged a very good meal for us at
a restaurant.

Huang: When we get a house, we will invite you. But we cannot be respon-
sible for increasing your weight! [Laughter]

Kissinger: You already have a heavy responsibility. [Laughter]

Huang: You celebrated your 50th birthday on the 27th.

Kissinger: Yes. On the 27th. There was a party on the 26th.

Huang: Congratulations.

Kissinger: Thank you. I don't know if the 50th is a significant occasion
in China.

Huang: Of course our 50th is an important occasion. In old China, the
40th was also an important occasion, for wishing longevity. Of course
we don't do these things any more.

Kissinger: I called you "general" to somebody a while ago. They told me
you were an artist.

Huang: It depends on how you look at it. They call me many titles. I
have written plays.

Kissinger: You didn't bring a spy with you. When Huang Hua arrived in
New York, the press said he had a master spy with him.

One other matter that concerns us very much, that I discussed with
Huang Hua Sunday, is Cambodia.

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We agree with the objectives which the Prime Minister stated to Ambassador Bruce, which is a neutral and independent Cambodia. We also agree very much with what Huang Hua said, that it should be a Cambodia free of outside interference.

Huang: And also a peaceful Cambodia.

Kissinger: But we sometimes have the impression Prince Sihanouk is too impatient. We think if talks could be started between the Phnom Penh Administration and the Khmer in the country, and if a ceasefire could be arranged -- say sixty days -- to allow negotiations to proceed, we could allow our people in Peking to begin talks with Sihanouk. Under those conditions we would of course stop the bombing. I go to Paris now next week, and we have pretty well settled the Vietnam issue and Laos issue -- and I gave your Ambassador the draft communique on Sunday.

Huang: Yes.

Kissinger: If then the fighting in Cambodia can be stopped, we will be in a position to have the Agreement strictly implemented, and there will be peace in Indochina. If not, we will have to bring pressure, and the whole process will continue. But we are prepared to face the realities of the situation. So given Prince Sihanouk's presence in Peking, any discussion that can take place with him before I leave here next Tuesday would be very much appreciated.

I have already said this to Ambassador Huang Hua, but I just wanted to underline the importance we attach to it.

The Ambassador always has to listen to my troubles with the North Vietnamese. You did this in Paris a few times. You always served me good food while you were doing it. [Laughter]

Huang: After so many years of negotiations in Paris, you finally reached agreement, and I hope it will be fully implemented. As for the views which you expressed concerning Cambodia, I will very speedily report to our Government. And Dr. Kissinger is of course very clear about Ambassador Bruce's talk with the Premier.

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Kissinger: Oh, yes. Which suggested that our objectives may be very similar. But there is always the problem of phasing them in a relevant time period.

Ambassador Bruce is very pleased by his reception in Peking. He enjoys himself so much we almost never hear from him. [Laughter]

Has he sold Hawaii or Guam? Will you keep me informed? [Laughter]

Huang: I know he is very pleased in Peking. Although he is already over 70, he is in good spirits.

Kissinger: He is a very fine man. And he has our total confidence, which is the important thing. And he is familiar with all the matters which we have been discussing and he knows how to communicate with us.

Huang: I brought a film of the Chinese table tennis team.

Kissinger: Oh, aren't you nice.

Huang: I saw it in London.

Kissinger: Does it have an English sound track?

Huang: Yes. And Dr. Kissinger is in the film, and the President, and Secretary Rogers, too.

Kissinger: Yes. It is very moving.

Huang: I know you have other engagements to attend, so I do not want to keep you.

Kissinger: I wanted to meet with you very briefly, to emphasize that the White House is determined to make our relationship a success. So if our relations don't improve, it is your fault. [Laughter]

Huang: Of course, mostly for Dr. Kissinger and the President, I will do my utmost efforts. The policy and principles were laid down by the President and Dr. Kissinger and by our leaders as stipulated in the

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Shanghai Communique, and we will carry out our policy just as your Ambassador is doing in Peking. It is almost 15 months to the day since the Shanghai Communique, and the normalization of our relations has been speeded up, and we intend to pursue the normalization of our relations.

Kissinger: I want to assure you this is the most important policy we are pursuing. You can see me or the President whenever you have something to discuss. Without formality.

Huang: Yes. I am ready to come many times.

Kissinger: We will have regular meetings, even when we have no regular business. We will establish regular times for our meetings.

The matters that used to be discussed in New York should be brought here. The matters that used to be discussed in Paris should be brought to the State Department. [They nod yes.]

[The meeting broke up at 6:45 p.m.]

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